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Legion

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Steven McDonnell of Santa Ana, Calif., sits outside a bunker on Hill 875, beneath a Christmas tree from his sister, Nov. 24, 1967. *AP*

FAREWELL TO THEE

Following Hawaiian tradition, sailors honor men killed in the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Naval Air Station Kaneohe, Oahu. The ceremony took place a few months later, possibly on Memorial Day, May 31, 1942.

National Archives photo



The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.3 million members. These wartime veterans, working through nearly 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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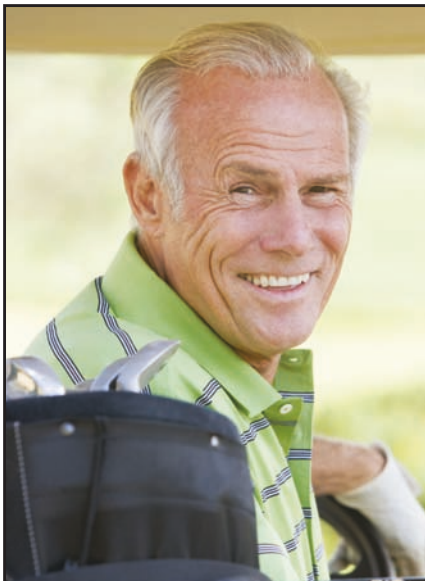
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Photo by Lucas Carter

'All-American'

I just finished reading Matt Grills' article (October) about The American Legion's new national commander, Dale Barnett. Although our ages differ some (I am 85), we have some things in common: I, too, was raised in Indiana (Washington), played a lot of basketball there, and had a long military career (Air Force for 30 years). I ended up in Texas and retired in 1980. I have been a member of the Legion for more than 60 years, and two daughters and a son are members. My oldest daughter has held several officer positions in the Auxiliary.

Thank you for a great article and a great magazine.

— Donald W. Grannan, Benbrook, Texas

'Relentless Forward Progress'

Excellent piece by Henry Howard on Noah Galloway (October). When I left the Marines in 1971, the military was doing virtually nothing in the way of decompressing Vietnam veterans. It was crazy for most of us, cut loose in an America that had become hostile to the military. We were alone, thinking to ourselves, "It's just me who has these nightmares, flashbacks, depression and binge drinking problems," afraid to bring up the subject outside our families for fear of being labeled a nutcase. And you sure didn't talk about your experiences, because some idiot would immediately jump in with his self-righteous antiwar political views as a cover-up for being scared cross-eyed of the draft.

I ran then, a lot – sometimes two or more times a day. It was the only thing that seemed to

make sense, and it definitely made me feel better. When I reached an age where my knees couldn't handle running anymore, I took up mountain biking. Now, at 77, I bike four to seven times a week, through rain, snow, wind and sunshine. It makes my world complete.

I began writing about my experiences for my children – so much that it evolved into a book that was picked up by Random House and published ("First Recon – Second to None"). I was lucky.

I also took up metalwork, building life-size figures out of car parts and scrap. I never sold a thing, but I love the welding, pounding, bending and end results. As Galloway points out, "Whatever it is, you have got to do it, and you have got to do it strong." We all need to look for inspiration in people setting great examples, like him.

— Paul R. Young, Adin, Calif.

Federal overtime rules

Two “qualified” members of Congress had the opportunity to represent the “Support” and “Oppose” views on federal overtime rules (Big Issues, October). For many years, I was a happy salaried worker who often worked overtime hours. There are many benefits to being a salaried worker of which Rep. Marcy Kaptur doesn’t seem to be aware. The few who feel abused need only tell management or look elsewhere. Most salaried workers appreciate that status. Don’t let the government use union tactics to bring about a solution to a non-problem.

– Harmon Poole, Wolfeboro, N.H.

The positions of Rep. Marcy Kaptur and Sen. Dan Coats are filled with rhetoric. Kaptur couches her statement using a narrowly defined term in the Fair Labor Standards Act: “salaried workers.” Unfortunately, far too many employees are classified that way when they in fact are not. Enforcement of the current laws would cause the company bookkeeper, or the fast-food assistant manager who cooks half the time, to be paid on an hourly basis instead of a monthly one. The result: the pay increase Kaptur wants.

Coats, on the other hand, makes the assumption that employee pay would decrease. That is highly doubtful. The result would likely be a greater turnover rate for employers who could ill afford it. (Although that may too be an unsupportable assumption.) Just like Kaptur, Coats also fails to consider the improperly classified workers

currently employed as “salaried.” Will a threshold change cause an increase cost to employers? Maybe, but not if they were already properly classifying and paying their employees.

– Bob Weaver, Anchorage, Alaska

VA and compound drugs

Tom Philpott wrote an interesting article regarding compounded medications and price scams that have apparently been run against TRICARE (Veterans Update, October). He does not, however, speak of compounded treatments and associated pharmacies that are legitimate.

I have suffered severe pain for over 20 years and used a compounded, topical ointment for close to 10 years. Because VA refuses to cover its cost, I have had to do so out of my own pocket. I can tell you that the ointment, made of four different medications, does work. Only by use of this topical, along with oral meds I get through VA, can I tolerate the excruciating pain with which I live.

The ointment, as well as the compounding pharmacy, were recommended by my primary care physician at VA. I have worked with two pharmacies that have made the ointment, and I have been satisfied with both.

It’s sad that VA won’t do the little research necessary to find legitimate compounding pharmacies or begin its own so that service-connected patients don’t have to add to their pain the added cost of treatment.

– David Lingenfelter, Spanaway, Wash.

VHA’s Michael Valentino says that VA fills almost everything internally, whether written by VA doctors or not. But that isn’t true. I took a prescription from my eye doctor to the pharmacy at the VA hospital in Louisville, Ky., which refused to accept it. They said it had to be from a VA doctor. They said to take it to my primary care doctor and ask her to copy it, but she refused.

It seems like a man with a title as long as Valentino’s should know the operation. I would like to know who is right.

– Clarence E. Hausz, Lanesville, Ind.

Looking for a ride

Regarding the military hitching rides on allies’ ships (Rapid Fire, October): it’s pathetic having to ask our allies if we can put Marines on their ships. We recently asked the French if they would watch our interests in the Persian Gulf by using their aircraft carrier since we didn’t have enough ships in the area.

Suppose another world war occurs. Who is going to step up and save the world this time? I’m beginning to doubt we could save ourselves. Our allies don’t trust us and our enemies don’t fear us. Wait until Iran gets nuclear power capability; that may incite North Korea to act up.

The article said we need more amphibious ships but it won’t happen until 2028. Let’s hope that with the next president things will happen much faster. We need a president who believes in a strong military. I definitely like the expression “make America strong again.”

– Edward Kendall, Hagerstown, Md.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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Samsung, Legion allies in Korean War legacy

One of the highlights of my American Legion career was when, as department commander of Georgia, I was able to participate in the dedication of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway in 2008.

It was special because it was not just about the naming of a stretch of pavement on U.S. 80. It was about remembering the heroes of a war that claimed more than 34,000 Americans and 415,000 South Koreans.

This is why I am so proud of The American Legion's relationship with Samsung Corp. Recently, the electronics giant donated \$1 million to the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation's maintenance fund. But this is hardly surprising to us. In 1995, Samsung bestowed a \$5 million endowment to the Legion for the establishment of a scholarship fund for family members of U.S. citizens who are war veterans.

Since then, the fund has enabled nearly 2,000 students to pursue educations through \$5.5 million in awarded scholarships. These bright young men and women understand the importance of good citizenship and respect for those who have fought for freedom.

It is a fight that continues today, as thousands of U.S. troops stand prepared with our South Korean allies to face provocation or even invasion by a militarized and tyrannical regime from the north.

This month I will personally convey The American Legion's gratitude to our troops and our South Korean allies when I visit Seoul and the demilitarized zone. I will tell them that although the cease-fire has been in effect for 62 years, we are well aware that the region is just one incident away from another devastating war.

The Samsung scholarships remind us that out of the ashes of war can come great legacies. One is the story of Rachel Forbes. A recipient of an original 1996 Samsung scholarship, she is now a kidney and pancreas transplant surgeon at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Nashville VA Medical Center, where she says she's grateful to have the opportunity to care for veterans on an almost daily basis.

At an American Legion luncheon last year, Austin Owen of Vestavia Hills, Va., recalled his grandfather's service as a tank commander during the Korean War. "He was really proud of me when I received the scholarship, and it opened the door for him to share his war experience with me," Owen says. "We are all appreciative."

In addition to investing in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in more than 500 U.S. public schools, Samsung continues to honor the service of Korean War veterans with a \$378,000 grant recognizing Samsung American Legion Scholars, many of them direct descendants of those who fought that war. The gift will include a ceremony in Washington and enable ongoing networking through the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association. Visit www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung for more information.

As always, the Legion Family shares Samsung's gratitude and respect for this special generation of veterans, whose service and sacrifice during history's "forgotten war" continues to benefit the free world.




National Commander
Dale Barnett

MEMORANDA

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The Legion's annual Holiday Donor Blood Drive runs through Dec. 31. Nearly 79,000 pints of blood were donated last year by Legion Family members.

 www.legion.org/security/blood

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National Commander Dale Barnett intends to raise \$1 million for the National Emergency Fund, which provides direct financial assistance to posts and Legionnaires affected by natural disasters.

 www.legion.org/nef

BASEBALL REGISTRATION

Any team wanting to compete in American Legion Baseball must sign up online. Registration for the 2016 season starts Jan. 1; aspiring players and volunteers can also learn more about participating.

 www.legion.org/baseball

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Children or adults who have had a severe allergic reaction to any component of Pprevnar 13® or any diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine should not receive Pprevnar 13®

BEFORE STARTING PREVNAR 13®

Tell your health care provider or your child's health care provider about all medical conditions, including:

- Previous allergic reactions to other vaccines
- Especially tell the health care provider if your child or you are taking medicines that can weaken the immune system, such as steroids (eg, prednisone) and cancer medicines, or are undergoing radiation therapy
- If you are pregnant or nursing, or if you plan to become pregnant

WARNING

- A temporary pause of breathing following vaccination has been observed in some infants born prematurely. Decisions about when to give Pprevnar 13® to infants born prematurely should be based on consideration of the individual infant's medical status, and the potential benefits and possible risks of vaccination
- The safety and efficacy of Pprevnar 13® when given to persons with a weakened immune system (such as HIV infection, damaged spleen, cancer, or kidney problems) is not known. Children or adults with a weakened immune system may have a reduced response to Pprevnar 13®

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS?

- In adults, the common side effects were pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site, limitation of arm movement, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, decreased appetite, chills, or rash
- The most commonly reported serious adverse events in children were bronchiolitis (an infection of the lungs) (0.9%), gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and small intestine) (0.9%), and pneumonia (0.9%)
- In children 6 weeks through 17 years, the most common side effects were tenderness, redness, or swelling at the injection site, irritability, decreased appetite, decreased or increased sleep, and fever. Most commonly reported side effects in children 5 years through 17 years also included hives

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT RECEIVING PREVNAR 13® WITH OTHER VACCINES?

- In adults, immune responses to Pprevnar 13® were reduced when given with injected seasonal flu vaccine
- When given within 1 year following pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine, immune response to Pprevnar 13® may be lower

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The safety and effectiveness of Pprevnar 13® when used in children less than 6 weeks of age is not known
- In a study in which children received acetaminophen prior to Pprevnar 13®, immune responses to some strains in the vaccine were lower compared with responses among children who received acetaminophen after vaccination only as needed
- Ask your health care provider about the risks and benefits of Pprevnar 13®. Only a health care provider can decide if Pprevnar 13® is right for you or your child

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information. Ask your health care provider or your child's health care provider for complete product information
- Go to www.Pprevnar13.com or call 1-800-666-7248

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Rx only

JOHANNA JENKINS

A district cap and Native American beadwork complete Johanna Jenkins' American Legion uniform, symbols of what's important to her.

The first female veteran on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah, Jenkins is proud to be a Ute and proud to be a Legionnaire.

"The tribe is my family," she says. "As I've become more involved in The American Legion, it's like having a second family."

In 2009, Jenkins joined Post 126 at Fort Duchesne, participating in the color guard. Four years later, she served as commander.

Last year, a past department commander and other mentors encouraged Jenkins to take on a bigger role: overseeing seven posts as district commander.

"I wouldn't be where I am now if they hadn't approached me and given me the confidence and trust I needed to lead," she says.

She's eager to help revitalize the Legion in her part of the state, and hopefully inspire other women to step up as leaders.

"We're here," she says. "We served just like men. We're not in the back anymore. We're coming to the front."

Watch an interview with Johanna Jenkins online:

www.legion.org/magazine

See an archive of past interviews:

www.legion.org/iamlegion

BRANCH OF SERVICE U.S. Army
(1993-1998)

MOS Motor transport operator

POST American Legion Post 126,
Fort Duchesne, Utah

YEARS IN THE LEGION 7

VETERANS ACTIVITIES

- Post sergeant-at-arms (2011-2015)
- Post commander (2013-2015)
- Utah Boys State counselor (2014-2015)
- District commander (2015-2016)
- Department historian (2015-2016)

Photo by Bill Schaefer

"Younger veterans need to understand that the older generation won't be here forever. We need to keep this going."



Defund Planned Parenthood



SUPPORT

Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz.

■ Franks is a member of the House Judiciary Committee.



OPPOSE

Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md.

■ Cardin is a member of the Senate Finance Health Care Subcommittee.

The United States of America is a unique nation, premised on the foundation that we are all created equal, and each of us is endowed by our Creator with the unalienable right to live. Yet recent video recordings have, irrefutably, revealed officers of the organization Planned Parenthood discussing the price of fetal organs and body parts, casually describing ways of killing babies that ensure the saleable organs remain undamaged.

One of these videos describes an incident where two Planned Parenthood employees “procure a brain” from a baby whose heart was still beating. Together the employees, starting at the baby’s chin, cut upward through the center of his face, pulled out the baby’s little brain and placed it in a container to be sold. I find it so crushingly sad that the only time this baby was ever held by anyone in his short life was by those who cut open his face to take his brain.

I know many will hold to the standard line and try to cloak all these horrors in the name of freedom of choice, but I beg you to open your hearts and ask yourselves what is so liberating about brutally dismembering living, helpless human babies. Political noise aside, protecting these helpless pain-capable unborn children is not a Republican or Democratic issue; it is a test of our basic humanity.

The president has worked to give billions of taxpayer dollars (against taxpayers’ wishes) to this insidious organization, the largest promoter and perpetrator of abortion on earth. As we continue to investigate the horrific abortion practices of Planned Parenthood, may the sands of time blow over the Capitol dome before we give it one more dime of taxpayers’ money.

In its landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court made it clear that women in this country have a constitutional right to abortion services, and that no legislature may ban abortion prior to viability. Nevertheless, anti-choice

advocates remain relentless in their efforts to undermine women’s rights in any way possible.

Since 1977, the Hyde Amendment has ensured that federal funding cannot be used for abortions, except in very narrow circumstanc-

es where the life of the mother is endangered or in cases of rape or incest.

The truth is that Planned Parenthood health centers are an integral part of the American health-care safety net, providing high-quality, affordable health-care services to 2.7 million patients annually nationwide. Every year, Planned Parenthood physicians and nurses provide family planning counseling and contraception to 2.1 million women, perform nearly 400,000 cervical cancer screenings and nearly 500,000 breast exams, and provide nearly 4.5 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

For many women, family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood provide the only basic health care they receive. More than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are located in rural areas, health-professional shortage areas or medically underserved areas, putting women living in those areas at particular risk of losing access to health-care services. It isn’t just Planned Parenthood that is under attack; it’s the one in every five women in this country who have relied on Planned Parenthood for health care at some point in their lifetimes.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Planned Parenthood is under scrutiny after videos surfaced that may show senior officials discussing the harvesting of fetal tissue. Critics questioned the organization’s federal funding, while others claim the recordings were doctored.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121



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On May 28, The American Legion hosted a hepatitis C testing event at Argo Summit Post 735 in Chicago.

Photo by Lucas Carter

Legion campaign takes on hepatitis C

BY BRIAN WALLHEIMER

Sue Kurecki felt tired all the time, so much that she retired because she couldn't get out of bed in the morning in time for work. Her first thought was that her age was getting the better of her.

"I started sleeping through my alarm," says 64-year-old Kurecki, a Navy veteran living in Crestwood, Ill. "I put it louder and louder and wouldn't hear it. Sometimes I wouldn't wake up until work was over. I couldn't work because I couldn't get up."

Unfortunately, something far more serious was happening. Blood work indicated that Kurecki had cancer, which doctors later found in her liver. Now the symptoms made sense. In addition to the cancer, Kurecki also had hepatitis C.

There were between 2.7 million and 3.9 million chronic cases of hepatitis C in the United States in 2013, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. VA says hepatitis C is the most common bloodborne infection in the world and estimates that veterans are about three times more likely to test positive. In fact, as many as one in five of those who served during the Vietnam War era may carry the virus.

Veterans run a higher risk of contracting the virus because of exposure to blood on a battlefield or through medical work, sharing of personal items such as razors or toothbrushes, blood transfusions or organ transplants prior to 1992, contaminated tattoo or piercing needles, or the use of air guns to deliver vaccinations to large groups of people.

Kurecki believes the latter is how she contracted hepatitis C.

"They used those guns," she says. "If there was blood on that gun they didn't know about and that person had hepatitis C, they gave it to someone else."

Kurecki likely had hepatitis C for years – maybe decades – before she became sick, which is common for people carrying the virus. But during that time, it slowly damages the liver and can lead to cancer, cirrhosis and liver failure.

That's why The American Legion is launching the "Take Down Hep C" campaign. With support from AbbVie, a research-based pharmaceutical company and national corporate ally of The American Legion, the awareness program seeks to inform veterans of their increased risk factors and disease symptoms, and urge them to get tested for hep C antibodies. Most VA medical centers will screen for little or no cost.

The Legion has hosted two free screenings this year. More than 100 veterans were screened in May during an event at Argo Summit Post 735 in Chicago, and nearly 350 Legionnaires were tested in August at the 97th National Convention in Baltimore. Support from AbbVie made both events possible; OraSure Technologies donated the test kits for Baltimore.

Maurice Johnson, a 61-year-old Army veteran and pastor at a Chicago church, says he isn't certain how he

See **HEP C** on page 16



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VETERANS - YOU MAY HAVE HEPATITIS C AND NOT KNOW IT

Here are some risk factors for Hepatitis C.

If you answer yes to any of the following, consider getting tested.

Were you:

- Born between 1945 and 1965?
- Accidentally stuck by a needle in a health care setting?
- A combat medical worker?
- Exposed to contaminated blood on the battlefield or during sexual contact with a person with Hep C?

Have you:

- Shared personal items such as razors or toothbrushes?
- Received a tattoo or body piercing with contaminated equipment or by a nonprofessional?
- Received a blood transfusion or organ transplant (before 1992)?

Do you have:

- Unexplained liver problems or inflammation, including abnormal liver tests?

**It is better to know.
If you're at risk, get tested.**

Learn more at
Legion.org/TakeDownHepC



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HEP C *continued from page 14*

contracted the hepatitis C virus. He may have been exposed through military immunizations, but Johnson admits that it could also have been through years of drug abuse.

"I don't know if I got it doing drugs," he says. "I was told I could have gotten it eating off a dirty utensil at a restaurant."

Many people have the virus and don't know. Symptoms – including fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, jaundice, abdominal pain, joint pain, dark urine and gray-colored stools – don't show up following infection in 80 percent of patients.

That was the case with Johnson, who learned he had hep C from a blood test during a routine visit to his doctor more than 20 years ago.

He went through two treatment programs that didn't cure him, before a third treatment seemed to work. He tested negative for hepatitis C in July and will have follow-up blood tests to confirm.

Kurecki also underwent unsuccessful treatments before a third rid her of the virus in May. She hopes veterans will take advantage of screenings before they find themselves in a situation similar to hers.

"It's a matter of life and death," she says. "VA will do the test. Take five minutes of your time and save your life."

And the life you save might be someone else's, Johnson adds. "If you don't find out or pay attention to the warning signs, you're endangering others' lives – the lives of your partners," he says. "Veterans need to step forward and see if they've got this."

Brian Wallheimer is a freelance writer in Rockford, Ill.

Hepatitis C antibody testing is available at all VA medical centers, and you may qualify for a free test.

Learn more online:

www.legion.org/takedownhepc

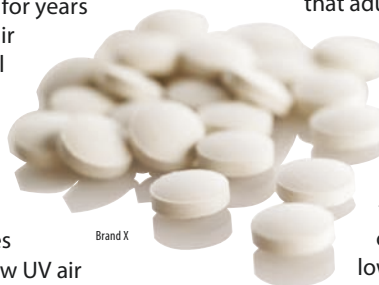
Hospital flu fighter available for homes

If you want to go a bit more high-tech in warding off the flu this season, consider taking a page from hospitals and other health environments, which for years have been using UV air purification to control the airborne spread of infections.

Such technology is now available to consumers from RXAir, which describes itself as "one of the few UV air purifiers that has been proven in independent EPA- and FDA-certified testing laboratories to destroy on first pass more than 99 percent of harmful viruses and bacteria."

The emphasis on eliminating rather than just trapping the bad pathogens makes RXAir different from more traditional air-filtration units. The purifier also works on strep, MRSA and other pathogens.

www.rxair.com



Aspirin therapy

Physicians serving on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force are recommending daily aspirin use to prevent heart attacks, stroke and colorectal cancer. The group suggests that adults 50 to 69 who are at an elevated risk for heart disease take a low-dose aspirin daily. Those in the 60-to-69 age bracket who are at high risk for heart disease should consider taking a lower-dosage amount, due to an increased risk of stomach and brain bleeding that can occur with age.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

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Blended plan leans on market risk, rewards

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Starting Jan. 1, 2018, new entrants to the military will fall under a “blended” retirement plan that lowers lifetime annuities by 20 percent but provides every member with a portable 401(k)-like Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) with government matching of payday contributions.

There’s also a lump-sum continuation payment at 12 years for careerists who agree to serve at least four more. The size of that payment can’t fall below a set minimum but will be higher for skills in demand.

Current servicemembers will be grandfathered from the changes, but those with 12 or fewer years in by Dec. 31, 2017, will be able to opt into the new plan. The date threshold protects an older member from making a poor choice, given that he or she won’t have time to build a TSP nest egg large enough by retirement to make up for the 20 percent cut in lifetime annuities.

The plan Congress adopted embraces most of the retirement changes recommended by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission last January. One goal is to provide at least some portable retirement savings to a majority of volunteers who leave service short of 20 years and don’t qualify now for any retirement benefits.

Another goal is to replace the rigid “20-years-or-bust” retirement with a more flexible plan and some modern tools used by the private sector.

A third goal, which Congress and the Department of Defense don’t tout, is to save the government billions of dollars annually. The plan does so by having TSP participants invest in stock and bond indexes from early on, enticed by government matching of their contributions up to 4 percent of basic pay. This shifts some of the burden of providing generous retirement benefits off the government and onto individuals, their discipline for investing, the predictability of market gains and the passage of time.

The Congressional Budget Office forecasts that the plan will save \$13.6 billion by 2025 even with TSP matching and continuation pay.

The American Legion and some other service organizations and military associations had

opposed the blended plan because of the 20 percent annuity cut for the future career force.

“The Legion is very skeptical of the whole idea,” said Joe Grassi, director of the Legion’s National Security Division. “We don’t like that military members are going to be vulnerable to market forces.” Also, a future Congress might decide to turn that 20 percent annuity cut starting in 2018 into something even deeper.

“In 25 years, it might be like working for any other employer, where you are largely responsible for your own retirement benefit,” he said. “At that point, what’s the incentive for experienced mid-level NCOs and officers to continue to serve?”

The commission predicts the plan will provide at least as much in lifetime benefit to members who serve 20 years or more as the current system if new entrants contribute at least 3 percent of basic pay into a TSP through a full career. This forecast assumes a 7.3 percent average annual return on TSP investments.

The match of up to 4 percent will come atop an automatic annual government contribution equal to 1 percent of basic pay to encourage participation. Government matching will continue through the 26th year of service. TSP balances will vest after two years so they can later be rolled into civilian employer 401(k) plans.

The continuation payment at 12 years will, at minimum, equal 2.5 times the monthly basic pay for active duty and 0.5 times the monthly active-duty pay for reserve and Guard careerists.

Members who serve at least 20 years will be able to convert 50 or 25 percent of their pre-Social-Security-age annuities into lump-sum payments at retirement. The amount would be set using a “discounted present value” formula. The idea is that many new retirees might use that cash to pay off debts, start businesses or buy homes.

It will also mean more retirement savings to the government as retirees opt to cut the lifetime value of their own benefits. That’s another feature that irks the Legion and other opponents of the plan.

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for more than 30 years.



EXCLUSIVE UNITED STATES MILITARY
WAR VETERAN SERVICE WATCHES
FEATURING WAR MEDAL DIALS, WAR RIBBONS & SERVICE EMBLEMS





A U.S. soldier reads a Christmas card in Vietnam on Dec. 22, 1966. AP

YULETIDE in VIETNAM

*'Twas right before Christmas and all through the jungle,
the troops could at least look forward to some Hope.*

BY KEITH NIGHTINGALE

The perimeter was slow to stir. For a week straight, the men had been working in what they called the Deep Green, the heaviest, densest part of the jungle. The work had been extremely taxing and dangerous. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army had used this area as a rest stop for many years and carved out broken trails alongside slippery, mud-slicked creek banks.

It was Dec. 24.

The date was meaningless to the unit, whose members were awakened by subtle rays of morning light that barely penetrated the canopy.

For soldiers here, home was a distant memory. Another world. For one, home might be a wheat farm in the American heartland. For another, the rolling hills of New England occupied his mind. For others, the bricks and pavement of the faraway inner city were home.

But this jungle was not it. Home and Christmas Eve were just passing thoughts or remembrances as each infantry soldier moved to renew and begin the rest of his life – whatever that might be in what was, for now, home, if only for today.

The usual drudgery unfolded. Trip wires, Claymores and flares were recovered. Cigarettes and instant C-ration coffee were drawn upon as Cheerios or Wheaties were in a previous life. Rifles were wiped down with dank oily cloths. Ponchos and liners were laid out to lose their accumulated residues, and unit leadership moved quietly along the perimeter, supervising their charges and working to keep the family together. The fact that Christmas was a date on the calendar did not require any change to the infantry's life cycle. Here at war, in a land of Eastern religions, Christianity and Judaism were subordinate to the necessities of survival. Faith, culture and customs would wait for a more appropriate time and place.

The senior officer received a series of instructions from a distant voice. His radio operator wordlessly proffered him a lit cigarette and an empty fruit can of instant coffee, in a ritual they had practiced for more than four months. A plastic-covered map was stretched across the officer's knees, his back resting against a large splay-rooted banyan tree. With his right hand, he pulled the black plastic radio handset to his ear, and with his left, he held both the cigarette and

the coffee. He drew deeply on the cigarette, took a short sip from the can and placed it on the ground. The cigarette hung on his lower lip, glued there by thick saliva.

With a red grease pencil, he made a small dot on the map. Next to the dot, the time: 1400. This is where he would shepherd his men. And by when. He passed the receiver back, picked up the can and drank deeply.

Christmas Eve had begun.

The unit, acting on some silent unseen signal, quietly stood and prepared to move out. Those with the heaviest loads – radio operators and machine gunners – extended their arms to companions who would balance their own loads and help them to their feet. Within 30 seconds, this microcosm of America faced a new direction and another new task, unmindful of the day or its significance.

Their uniformity went beyond the OG-107 fatigues that clung to their skin. Their eyes shared the same gaze: quiet endurance. And, like most soldiers on the cutting edge of existence, their expressions were drawn inward. Where the rucksack harnesses had bitten into their shoulders over the week, salty white grooves had taken shape. Humidity and sweat soon soaked their skin and darkened their fatigues.

They moved forward, uniformly, understanding that life and death were both possibilities by day's end. Furtive thoughts of home bounced through their heads. In the season of yuletide sharing among family at home, the most precious gift each of these soldiers privately desired was just another day.

The column progressed through the dense undergrowth, segments unseen by the whole but felt by everyone within it. No human form could be detected beyond about 30 meters. Each soldier was mindful that the enemy also benefited from this effect and remained in a state of alertness – always on edge, fighting not to succumb to ennui. By noon, the unit reached the edge of the jungle and remained hidden in the vegetation where darkness met the open sunlit fields. The soldiers stopped just short of the clearing, sank into the shade and formed in a triangle. The commander silently indicated with hand gestures to the men:

eat and rest. Subordinate leaders selectively chose others to move into concealed security positions along the resting perimeter.

Troops reached into their rucksacks or pants pockets and extracted cans or packages of food and began their desultory ingestion. Some lay their heads on rucksacks and smoked cigarettes. Others drew from their canteens, wiped their faces and quietly awaited the war's next act.

The commander, centered now in the perimeter, called in his subordinate leadership. They quietly gathered in a circle and listened. The unit would be picked up at 1400 from a zone they would establish just 100 meters away, in the adjacent paddy field. They would be flown back to base camp and move directly to a division assembly area next to the airfield.

They were to be whisked off the battlefield to sit in the audience of the annual Bob Hope Christmas Show. There would be no showers, beer, chow or fresh clothes. It was off the choppers and assemble in front of Hope.

Merry Christmas.

The commander explained that this was the only field unit to be brought in because it had gone the longest without rotation. The unit would also be provided seats relatively close to the stage. They would be the only troops there with full field gear, weapons and rucksacks. This was intended to be an honor and a Christmas present from the seniors, for work well done. There were several questions and queries, none of which could be adequately addressed, from the subordinate leaders. They broke up and moved to their respective elements to pass along the upcoming events.

By 1400, the troops were standing in the blazing sunlight, arranged in a serial of six groups, each with three soldiers facing three soldiers spread along a distance of about 100 meters in the dry rice fields. A yellow smoke canister popped in the middle of the formation. Smoke curled slowly upward in the still, hot air.

Precisely on time, a string of helicopters arrived overhead, and settled near each group. Their blades swirled and beat the smoke, dirt and rice husks into a brown cloud. As soon as the choppers touched earth, the troops moved toward them, placed their boots on the skids and in a single motion turned their backs to the interior, dropped their rucks on the floor and sat down on the edge, looking out, legs dangling.

In fewer than 15 seconds, the birds pulled full power, whipping up another a brown cloud of detritus, and struggled into the blue sky. Inside,

the troops closed their eyes to the debris and then opened them as the hot waves of dirt and JP-4 fumes dissipated, to be replaced by the cool forced air of the forward flight.

For the first time in weeks, the sweat, dirt and heat ventilated from the uniforms and was replaced by a wonderful coolness. Eyes surveyed the shimmering fields, creeks, villages and vegetation below. Minds wandered into a rejuvenating idleness. An abrupt change of RPM announced the descent and imminent arrival.

The birds touched down on a partially asphalted strip. Laterite dirt and the gluey stench of JP-4 floated upward. Some men in starched fatigues and spit-shined boots motioned the incoming soldiers to an assembly area where they were to stand and await the remainder of the unit. There was no shade and no discussion, though ice water was available from Lyster bags throughout the open field.

In less than an hour, the entire unit had assembled, drunk its fill of water and awaited instructions. The commander, with no discussion, formed the unit and led the snaking column less than a mile. They passed through a large bowl-shaped enclosure marked by white engineer tape. Several more starched figures approached the commander and pointed to an area near a large stage and white tent. They went to the designated area.

The unit, fewer than 100 in all, settled in about 30 meters from the center stage, surrounded by the mass of local units and headquarters personnel. Directly in front of them were arrayed the wounded and sick, dressed in their light green hospital gowns. Those in wheelchairs were positioned at the very front, surrounded by nurses, doctors, IVs, bottles and other medical supplies. In front of the wheelchairs were two rows of senior personnel, all in tightly starched fatigues, spit-shined boots and wearing custom-tailored hats with ranks embroidered and other badges attached.

The troops dropped their rucks, shouldered the rifles with barrels pointing downward, and sat on the backs of the rucks as tightly as the NCOs could force them. Several starched fatigues walked through the group, stopping to point the machine-gun barrels to the rear, rather than at the stage.

In time, the entire area was filled. A mass of humanity had flowed in to enjoy the annual Christmas visit from Bob Hope and his troupe. Loudspeakers had been set up on poles scattered throughout the assemblage, but the quality was shaky. The crackling banter between Hope and his companions was largely inaudible toward the rear.

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Entertainer Anita Bryant sings with a U.S. soldier to a crowd of 15,000 at Bob Hope's Christmas show in Vietnam in 1966. *AP*

Female dancers, in the flesh, produced loud cries from the troops.

Between acts, the soldiers talked among themselves and smoked cigarettes, in the torpor of stultifying heat.

The Hope show featured alternating talk, music, dancing and diversion. As professional as Hope was, the crowd noise and overarching static equaled or dominated the production. Individuals retreated into private worlds for moments only to be brought out by a specific word, note or action from the stage. Hope had achieved his larger aim. The troops didn't care if they missed some nuance of a joke or song. At least for now, they were not in mortal danger, and some piece of the outside world was here, having shown up for Christmas.

After about an hour and without announcement, but backed by the dull noise of the assembled soldiers, a solitary woman walked to the center of the unoccupied stage. She was wearing a long dress – so different from the scantily clad women who'd earlier performed. Her hair was dark auburn. It fell to her shoulders and curled at the ends. She looked like a girl from home. Unheard by most, she began to sing.

The notes were initially lost on the crowd except for the first rows of wounded and senior officers, who watched, transfixed. Then, like ripples from a rock thrown into a pond, silence passed across the assemblage of soldiers. They stopped talking, dropped their cigarettes and focused on the tiny figure standing on the stage.

Anita Bryant had quietly walked to the center stage and began singing "Silent Night" a capella. The notes drifted from the stage to the top row of soldiers and into the high blue space above them. For a moment, the heat could be ignored, the sweat and stink of massed humanity unnoticed, and Christmas remembered.

Thousands of olive-drab servants of our nation were transported back home. For once in their tour of duty, they experienced a quiet that allowed wonderful, melodic words to comfort them in remembrance of things past and hopeful for things yet to occur.

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The song lasted no more than three minutes, but it would play in the soldiers' memories for the rest of their lives. As she concluded, Anita Bryant placed the microphone back on its stand, blew a silent tear-eyed kiss to the troops, turned around and walked off the stage.

Not a sound could be heard. And Hope, knowing best, just stood there, looking across the audience, holding the moment for everyone, brief as it was, during which each of these soldiers in Vietnam was able to come home, as he or she knew it, and there was peace on earth and good will among them all. 🌿

Keith Nightingale is a retired U.S. Army colonel, military history writer and frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

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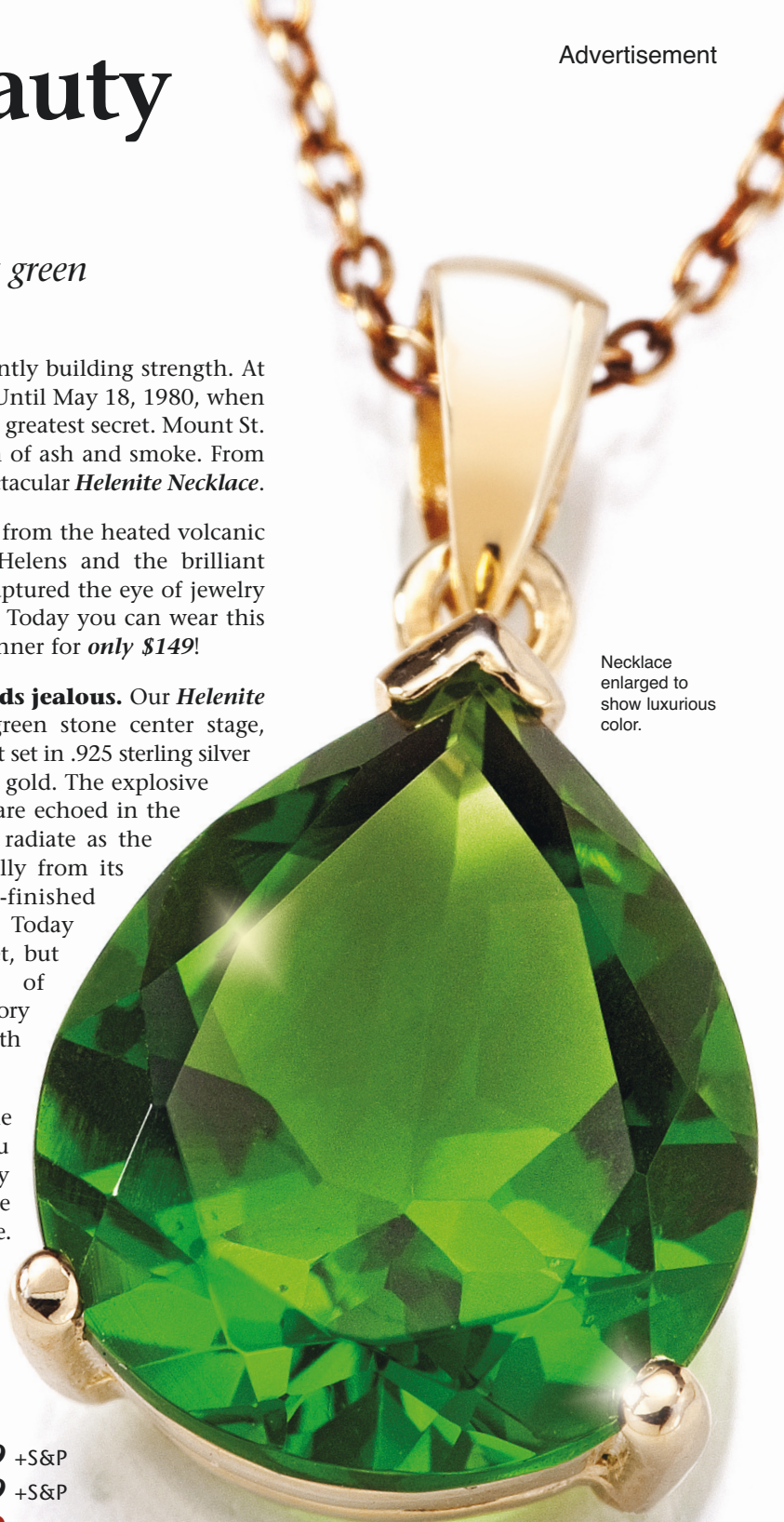
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*Historically, America's inward turns
don't end well. Will this one?*

BROKEN ENGAGEMENTS

BY ALAN W. DOWD

Illustration by Christopher Zacharow/Illustration Source

In 2011, in one of his last addresses as defense secretary, Robert Gates worried that the White House and Congress were contemplating changes to America's national-security posture without taking into account the long-term implications.

"If we are going to reduce the resources and the size of the U.S. military," he warned, "people need to make conscious choices about what the implications are for the security of the country ... The tough choices ahead are really about the kind of role the American people – accustomed to unquestioned military dominance for the past two decades – want their country to play in the world."

Four years later, the consequences of a United States with fewer military resources and a smaller role in the world are coming into focus. The resulting picture is forcing Americans, though weighed down by the costs of engagement, to consider the costs of disengagement.

FROM WORLD WAR TO COLD WAR Fifty-eight percent of Americans say the United States "should not take the leading role ... in trying to solve international problems." A 2013 Pew poll revealed that 52 percent of Americans say the United States "should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own" – up from 30 percent in 2002 and 20 percent in 1964.

Reflecting the national mood, President Barack Obama has said, "It is time to focus on nation-building here at home." Interestingly, at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue – and the other end of the political spectrum – Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., has a similar view. "Let's quit building bridges in foreign countries and use that money to build some bridges here at home," he declares, calling for "a foreign policy that is reluctant," with "less soldiers stationed overseas and less bases."

This turn inward, this drift toward disengagement, is a natural reaction to a period of costly global engagement. Since 9/11, the U.S. military has engaged in significant combat operations and/or sustained new deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Djibouti, West Africa, Eastern Europe, Syria and Yemen. Afghanistan and Iraq alone have claimed 6,846 American lives and devoured \$1.64 trillion.

However, history reminds us that there are also costs to disengagement.

When the Great War began, President Woodrow Wilson pledged to be "neutral in fact as well as in name." Germany responded with unrestricted

submarine warfare and a secret plan to lure Mexico into an alliance of treachery. Neutrality and nonengagement had nearly led to catastrophe.

After the war, the American people retreated from the responsibilities of global leadership for a generation, disengaged from Europe and stayed out of the world's way. Then Chamberlain gave us Munich, Hitler gave us another European war, and Japan gave us Pearl Harbor. Disengagement proved catastrophic.

After the Pearl Harbor attack, President Franklin Roosevelt steered the United States into an era of unprecedented global engagement. He scolded "those Americans who believed that we could live under the illusion of isolationism" and who "wanted the American eagle to imitate the tactics of the ostrich."

But the nation's transformation from hermit republic to global power was anything but smooth or certain. In October 1945 – just two months after the *Missouri* steamed into Tokyo Bay – Gen. George Marshall decried the "disintegration not only of the armed forces, but apparently ... all conception of world responsibility," warily asking, "Are we already, at this early date, inviting that same international disrespect that prevailed before this war?"

Stalin would answer Marshall's question, gobbling up half of Europe, blockading Berlin and arming Kim Il Sung in preparation for his invasion of South Korea.

The U.S. military had taken up positions in Korea in 1945, but withdrew all combat forces in 1949. Then, in 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that Japan, Alaska and the Philippines fell within America's "defensive perimeter." Korea didn't. Stalin noticed.

"So far as the military security in other areas of the Pacific is concerned," Acheson explained at the time, "no person can guarantee these areas against military attack."

In fact, the United States would guarantee Korea against military attack – at a cost of 38,000 American lives, 103,250 South Korean troops and 2 million civilian casualties. Again, disengagement proved catastrophic, which is why U.S. troops remain in Korea to this day.

After Vietnam, Washington pulled back, cut back and pursued detente with Moscow in hopes of lessening Cold War tensions. Moscow responded by building up its military and growing more aggressive, not more accommodating. In addition, it expanded its global footprint in Central America, Africa and Afghanistan.

Disengagers argue for a return to the days when America kept to itself. But the notion that the United States lived, once upon a time, in blissful isolation is more fiction than fact.

FROM COLD WAR TO HOT WAR Washington's interest in Afghanistan declined dramatically after the Red Army was defeated by U.S.-backed fighters. "As soon as the Soviets left Afghanistan, we turned our backs on Afghanistan," Gates recalls. Then the Taliban gave Osama bin Laden a base of operations inside Afghanistan, and bin Laden gave us 9/11, inexorably drawing the United States back in. Yet again, disengagement carried heavy costs.

With America filing toward the exit, some observers worry about history repeating itself. "We have no realistic way to deal with threats in this region without bases in eastern Afghanistan," retired Gen. David Petraeus recently warned.

Recognizing that Americans had grown not only war-weary but increasingly world-weary, Obama made good on his pledge to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011, declared that "core al-Qaida" was "on the path to defeat" in 2013, and invited the nation "to turn the page on more than a decade in which so much of our foreign policy was focused on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq" in 2014.

But if the 2003 invasion of Iraq reminded the American people of the costs of engagement, the 2011 withdrawal from Iraq would re-remind them of the costs of disengagement.

By every metric, post-surge Iraq was in better shape than pre-surge Iraq, and the consensus among military commanders was that Iraq needed the U.S. military's support to sustain the upward trajectory of the surge. Even so, the disengagers viewed U.S. involvement in Iraq as a problem to be corrected rather than a commitment to be sustained. As former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta laments in his memoir "Worthy Fights," the Obama White House was "so eager to rid itself of Iraq that it was willing to withdraw rather than lock in arrangements that would preserve our influence and interests."

The consequences of disengagement were predictable: without the steadying hand of the U.S. military, the Maliki government abused its power; sectarian tensions exploded; the window of opportunity for Iranian mischief widened; al-Qaida in Iraq reconstituted and rebranded itself as the

Islamic State (aka ISIS); Baghdad was nearly overrun; Yazidis, Shiites and Christians were massacred; and ISIS declared a jihadist caliphate in the heart of the Middle East. Only Obama's 11th-hour decision to reverse course and redeploy U.S. forces back into Iraq prevented the country from disintegrating, which would have been a catastrophe within a catastrophe.

As for turning the page on a decade of war and defeating core al-Qaida, it seems the Obama administration misread the takedown of bin Laden as a strategic victory rather than a tactical success. Put another way, if the Bush administration's global war on terror was too broad, the Obama administration's war on core al-Qaida proved too limited. As a RAND study concludes, "Using the state of core al-Qaida ... as a gauge of the movement's strengths (or weaknesses) is increasingly anachronistic" given that "Salafi-jihadist groups ... have started to resurge in North Africa and the Middle East." For example:

- There are 41 jihadist groups in 24 countries today – up from 21 in 18 countries in 2004.

- ISIS controls 34,000 square miles of territory and reigns over a population of some 2 million people. Plus, it is spreading beyond the region, with affiliates in Afghanistan, Libya, Egypt and Nigeria. One of those affiliates, Boko Haram, has declared its own ISIS-style state in northeastern Nigeria.

- Director of National Intelligence James Clapper called 2014 "the most lethal year for global terrorism in the 45 years such data has been compiled."

BURDENS AND BOOTS Doubtless, disengagers would cite the above list to argue against getting involved in foreign problems in the first place – and to argue for a return to the days when America kept to itself. But the notion that the United States lived, once upon a time, in blissful isolation is more fiction than fact. True, when the United States was young and weak, President George Washington plotted a path of studied nonintervention. But as a trading nation, a maritime nation, a mission-oriented nation, America was destined to be engaged in the world.

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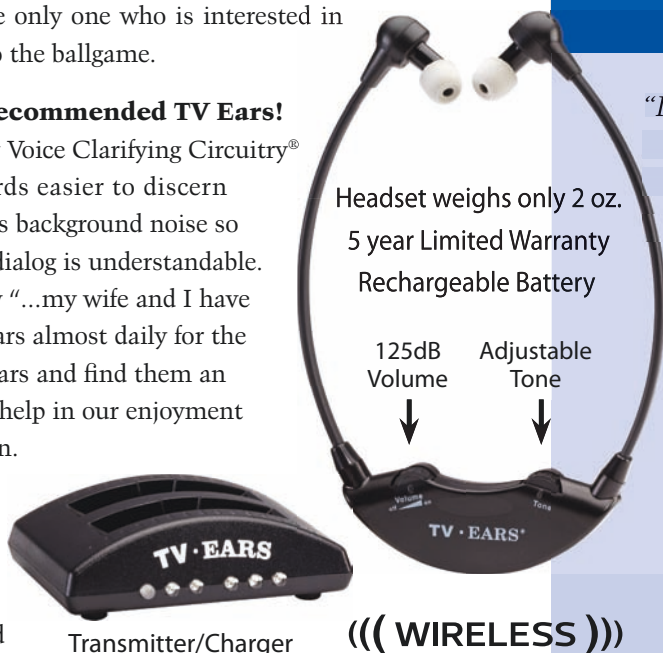
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No matter what the disengagers say, America's historic role and current position on the world stage give it a special responsibility to sustain the liberal global order forged after World War II.

A mere four years after Washington left office, President Thomas Jefferson launched a war against piracy halfway around the world, setting the stage for what was to come. Of the 340-plus “notable deployments of U.S. military forces overseas” tallied by the Congressional Research Service, 135 occurred before U.S. entry into World War I. In this light, America’s isolationism during the interwar years looks like an aberration.

The underlying premise of the American people’s increasingly standoff approach to the world seems to be that U.S. intervention causes more problems than it solves. But far from being part of the problem, U.S. boots on the ground are often part of the solution. U.S. troops have been in Germany and Japan since 1945, South Korea since 1950, Kuwait since 1991 and Kosovo since 1999. The common denominator of this diverse group is that each is peaceful, friendly and stable.

Today, 25 years after rushing to the region to shield Saudi Arabia from Saddam Hussein, U.S. troops are back in Iraq – defending U.S. interests and allies, fighting jihadists, buttressing a fragile government and providing some semblance of stability amid the chaos. Such is the burden of being a superpower with a conscience.

CHAOS AND CONFLICT While engagement carries costs – sometimes great costs – it can yield great returns. U.S. engagement pushed the nation’s borders to the Pacific in the 1800s, elevated America’s global position in the early 1900s, turned the tide during World War I, prevented a return to the Dark Ages during World War II, refashioned Japan and Germany into liberal democracies during the postwar peace, preserved free governments and free markets during the Cold War, transformed Europe from an incubator of world wars into a partnership of peace and prosperity, and for 70-plus years has prevented a return to the great-power wars so commonplace between 1745 and 1945.

“The era of American predominance,” as Robert Kagan of the Brookings Institution concludes, “has shown that there is no better recipe for great-power peace than certainty about who holds the upper hand.” But thanks to a confluence of factors –

Washington’s drift toward disengagement, sequestration’s erosion of the armed forces, the public’s world-weariness – the United States is dealing away that upper hand. The defense budget has fallen from 4.7 percent of GDP in 2009 to 3.2 percent today. If current projections hold, it will be just 2.8 percent of GDP by 2018-2019.

The last time the United States invested so little on defense was, ominously, 1940. This is the best way to invite the very worst of possibilities, what Churchill called “temptations to a trial of strength.” These once-avoidable trials of strength are proliferating with Moscow in Eastern Europe and Syria, with Beijing in the South China Sea and with Tehran in the Persian Gulf.

No matter what the disengagers say, America’s historic role and current position on the world stage give it a special responsibility to sustain the liberal global order forged after World War II – an order that benefits America more than any other nation. The alternative path – the retreat of U.S. power – leads to the spread of chaos and conflict.

Just look at today’s headlines. As Washington focuses on nation-building at home and allows sequestration to whittle away at the big stick, China’s military spending has grown 170 percent the past decade, giving it the confidence and capability to challenge the United States’ once-unquestioned primacy in the Pacific. Russia, in the midst of a 108-percent increase in military spending, is reversing the settled outcomes of the Cold War. Iran is emerging as a regional hegemon. Syria has reopened the Pandora’s box of chemical weapons. ISIS is erasing international borders and threatening U.S. allies in Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The post-World War II order built by the United States did not emerge by accident and does not endure by magic. It presupposes U.S. engagement and “requires positive, active effort and sacrifice,” as Marshall explained in 1945. “Above all, it is a continuing process.” 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor of The American Legion Magazine and a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America’s Purpose.

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Brig. Gen. Malcolm Frost serves as Army chief of public affairs at the Pentagon. He visited Indianapolis in September as part of the "Meet Your Army" initiative.

Photo by Clay Lomneth

'The greatest team on earth'

New chief of public affairs wants to reacquaint Americans with their army.

BY MATT GRILLS

Since the wars of 9/11 began, the U.S. Army hasn't had difficulty getting press. From Iraq's and Afghanistan's battlefields, embedded reporters have told soldiers' stories and given Americans real-time glimpses of their fighting force in action.

Fewer combat operations, though, mean a decline in media attention. With that in mind, Brig. Gen. Malcolm Frost, the Army's chief of public affairs, has launched "Meet Your Army," a campaign to boost the service's profile in cities and communities where it has little to no presence.

"I've seen firsthand the power of telling our story and our responsibility to the American people to tell what we're doing in support of our nation's interests," he says. "We are resourced by the public, we have the trust and confidence of the public, and they need to know what's happening. We are the people's army."

Frost is a 27-year Army veteran, commissioned as an infantry officer after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1988. He has deployed in support of Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia, 1995), Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, 2002-2003) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (2006-2007). Most recently, he served as deputy director for operations in the National Military Command Center (J3) of the Joint Staff at the Pentagon, and as deputy commanding general-support for the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C.

During his visit to Indianapolis in September for a Meet Your Army event, *The American Legion Magazine* interviewed Frost about the need for "multifunctional" public affairs professionals, common misconceptions about the Army and the importance of connecting with the public in an age of severe military cuts.

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In May, you assumed the duties of Army chief of public affairs. There's the Army's on-paper definition of that job, but what's yours?

I break it down into a few different categories. First, we have to communicate to the American people; that is strategic communications. How do we tell the Army story? The next facet is media relations. We have a commitment to respond to the media, interact with the media, and assist the media as they tell the stories they would like to tell the American people about the Army. We interact with 150 national outlets on a daily basis, with probably upwards of 600 queries a month. We also have a responsibility for community outreach – everything from bands, ceremonies and overflights to just interacting with the communities around our bases, camps, posts and installations. So it's a lot of different responsibilities, but those are three primary areas we focus on.

How has our drawdown in the Middle East changed the Army's relations with the media?

For the past 14 years, during the global war on terrorism, the Army and the media have enjoyed a very mutually beneficial relationship, and that was because we had embeds at the tactical level covering the wars; the Army, its mission and its soldiers were thrust into the living rooms of America through that warfare. We're at what I call a strategic communications inflection point, where the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan don't have near the numbers of boots on the ground, nor do we have near the media covering them. The era of the media embed in abundance is over. But we have huge commitments and operations going on, so instead of public affairs professionals having the luxury of media coming to us and wanting to tell our story and being with us all the time, we have to proactively reverse that and seek them out – not just them, but the public – and tell the story of the Army ourselves.

Less than 1 percent of U.S. citizens serve in the military. Because of that, there's always the potential for a military-civilian divide. If you look at the Army, we're mostly based in the south and the southeast from an active-duty standpoint, away from the mass-media market. So it is incumbent upon us to tell our story to the average American who doesn't have a connection to the military, much less the Army, and to the youth of America, because we need them to join the greatest team on earth. We want America's best and brightest to come into the Army, where there are tremendous opportunities that few other organizations have.

What is the job of an Army public affairs specialist in 2015?

We're going through a lot of changes. In the Army, we still have journalists, broadcasters and combat cameramen as separate skills. The way I see it, if a commander on the battlefield or a commander leaving his office says, "I need my public affairs professional to come with me," who do they turn to? The broadcaster, the combat cameraman or the journalist? What we are doing is converging the military occupational skills, broadcaster and journalist, and by the end of 2016 that will become one skill. We'll cross-train the journalists and broadcasters here and create a new training regimen for that multifunctional public affairs professional. Then we'll study combat camera and see what we can do there as well.

How much more important is public affairs in the age of social media?

You have to always deal in the facts. You have to look at every story, understand it, and if it's factually incorrect you challenge the facts. What I've seen in the six months I've been here is that professional reporters will listen; they will change what facts are wrong. Now, tone and context are another thing. But you've got to address every single story because the game is going to get played; the stories are going to get written whether you engage the media or not. So you need to fill in the gaps with facts they don't have, which may in turn give a different context and tone to the story. I think that's important in relationships with the media, so they can see the whole picture.

In the Army, we have a diverse audience. We have the retiree population that wants ink on their fingers and to be surprised when they turn the page. Then we have the youth of America, who want to control what they see and are looking down at their personal devices; that's where they get their news. You have to communicate across that wide spectrum. That's a challenge, but I think we're up for it.

Describe the "Meet Your Army" initiative.

We want to tell the American public what their army is doing, really introduce ourselves so they understand what soldiers are and what soldiers do, and quite frankly continue that relationship so they better understand how the Army supports our nation and its interests at home and abroad. Also, we're informing them about the tremendous team the Army is and what it means to be a soldier – to serve something greater than yourself, to be part

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Mike Lindell
Inventor of MyPillow®

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Lindell has been featured on numerous talk shows, including *Fox Business News* and *Imus in the Morning*. Lindell and MyPillow have also appeared in feature stories in *The New York Times* and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. MyPillow has received the coveted "Q Star Award" for Product Concept of the Year from QVC, and has been selected as the Official Pillow of the National Sleep Foundation.

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- Todd Westerbeck
U.S. Navy



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Michael J. Lindell
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In your view, what is the current state of the Army? What are its most pressing challenges?

It's probably not well known that we have currently deployed, executing operations, over 83,000 soldiers right now around the world. Add the forward stationed forces and those in the continental United States who are supporting those forces, and that's 173,000 soldiers. That's a big number. If you look at what Russia's doing in Eastern Europe, that is harkening back to the Cold War, when we had 300,000 soldiers in Europe. Now we have 30,000. That's just one piece. You have the Middle East and Southwest Asia. You have transnational terrorism and the threats of ISIS, al-Qaida and other challenges in that region. We are fighting, advising, training and assisting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Then you go to Korea, where we have 19,000 soldiers ready to fight tonight against any kind of threat that might come across the demilitarized zone. We are assuring allies, deterring adversaries and building partner capacity through multinational and joint exercises across the world, whether in Australia, Thailand, the Philippines or Malaysia. In Africa, we are helping to train and build armies and doing humanitarian assistance. When you start to look at the hybrid threats that exist – the combination of cyber, guerrilla and conventional warfare – the fact that we are as committed as we are, I think, comes as a surprise to folks.

Currently the force structure for the active Army is about 490,000 soldiers. Due to current budget dynamics and the environment, we are on a path toward 450,000 by the end of 2017. That is the lowest number we've had since sometime after World War II. Based on the current environment and what we're being asked to do in support of defense strategic guidance and the national military strategy, that puts us at high risk to do all that. And the next thing that could happen is sequestration. That is still looming, and it is the law of the land. If sequestration is not repealed, the Army's budget will continue to get cut as mandated by law, and we will be forced to reduce the active Army force structure down to 420,000. That's something we don't want to see.

When you meet with students, civic leaders and the public, you emphasize the education, career opportunities and personal growth offered by the Army. What are some common misconceptions about the Army you address?

One thing I'd say is when there's a bad news report, sometimes we often tend to take one report and make a judgment about an entire population or organization. We have to be careful about that. Like any organization, we have our challenges, and we're working through issues. But one of the misconceptions out there is that if you send your son or daughter to the Army, they're going to get damaged. I've tried to dispel that (by talking about) what it means to be a soldier. Also, there are those who think that we only fight land wars. Well, we don't. We do humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. We are assuring allies, training and advising other armies, developing alliances and relationships abroad, doing counterinsurgency and stability operations. So I think there's a little bit of a misunderstanding on that aspect, and there are other misconceptions: the idea that you don't get educated, you don't get any technical skills. That couldn't be any further from the truth. I've had more training, more education personally than I could ever have imagined in the Army.

How much do military cuts, a shrinking force, and the end of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan factor into the Army's desire to connect, or reconnect, with the public?

I think it factors in a lot, because America is war weary; that's obvious. If America's war weary, imagine if you're a soldier who's been at war for the past 12 to 14 years. But we have to be prepared to do it because it's our job and our mission. Iraq and Afghanistan start to disappear from people's minds because we don't have as many forces committed, and there's the economy and other domestic issues that the nation rightly focuses on. But we have to remember that our military is out there every single day trying to prevent anything from coming to our shores, and ensuring that we're achieving our interests around the world along with the other agencies we're teamed with. This commitment doesn't stop just because we don't have as many forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Part of the reason why we're doing this initiative is because American citizens aren't being told that story. So it's our job to do it. 🌿

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.



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James Harris, center, an Army veteran and member of Post 73 in Kansas, meets his service dog, Sky, on June 18. Legion Family members helped OCW raise funds for the dog, recommended by VA doctors as part of Harris' therapy. Photo by Travis Heying

A War Like No Other

American Legion service officers recognize the unique needs and concerns of post-9/11 veterans.

BY CAJUN COMEAU

"We'll have to deal with the networks. One of the ways to do that is to drain the swamp they live in. And that means dealing not only with the terrorists, but those who harbor terrorists. This will take a long, sustained effort. It will require the support of the American people as well as our friends and allies around the world."

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld,
in a press briefing, Sept. 18, 2001

Rumsfeld could hardly have known, when he spoke those famous words, that 14 years later the United States would still be highly engaged in Afghanistan, Northern Africa and other hot spots

around the world to hunt down and destroy terrorists who seek to do harm here and abroad. The men and women who have served in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa and other areas of the global war on terror have endured a span of sustained war unlike any in U.S. history. The operational tempo, in addition to multiple deployments and redeployments, has created a repetitious cycle of exposure to mental and physical stress and a requirement to quickly adapt to life at home.

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with the indigenous population, and coming up with nonconventional and ingenious ways of killing you and your troops, you cannot imagine the physical and psychological demands faced by military members of this era. Not only have the active-duty troops been called into repeated action, but reserve and National Guard elements have deployed numerous times in support of the wartime mission all over the globe.

Not to elevate their struggles and service above any other period of war or peacetime service, but U.S. servicemembers of the 21st century face unique, unprecedented challenges. They must be able to use automation, computer imaging, electronic topography and other innovations in technology to function effectively on the battlefield. Coupled with that high level of practical intelligence, they must be ready – no matter their job – to become infantry soldiers and place fire on enemy personnel and equipment efficiently and decisively. The lines between “combatant” and “noncombatant” personnel have never been so blurred as they are today. Everyone

is in the fight. And if they are unable to perform to a high standard, they or someone else may die because of it.

The unique characteristics of this war have led to specific outcomes for those returning to civilian lives. A report by the George W. Bush Institute on challenges faced by post-9/11 veterans found:

- Employment and education are primary concerns of post-9/11 veterans because they affect so many other social, economic and wellness factors in the life of a veteran.
- The social and cultural distance between post-9/11 veterans and civilians – referred to as the military-civilian divide – represents a pervasive barrier to post-service life. Eighty-four percent of veterans say other Americans have little or no understanding of them, and 71 percent of Americans say they have little or no understanding of veterans.
- The media have not accurately represented the issues of post-9/11 veterans well, but can play a powerful and enduring role in shaping the narrative that will define this generation.



Jan. 7, 2015

Charlie Hebdo shooting

Two gunmen from al-Qaida's Yemen branch force their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. Armed with assault rifles, they kill 11 people and injure 11 others in the building. A two-day manhunt leads to a shootout with police in which the terrorists are shot and killed.

“Let us unite in our prayers for U.S. servicemen and women who today are in harm's way. Let's be sure we are providing them the resources they need to succeed in the war theater. We cannot let sequestration harm them, or our national security.”

2014-2015 American Legion National Commander Mike Helm, testifying at a joint session of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs committees on Feb. 25, 2015



Spring 2015

ISIS vs. the world

ISIS clashes with Iraqi and Syrian forces aided by a growing international coalition, including air support from the United States. Islamic State acts of terrorism are recorded in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt. U.S. Special Operations forces kill senior ISIS commander Abu Sayyaf in eastern Syria in a May 15-16 mission. Two days later, ISIS recaptures Ramadi in a strike that leaves more than 500 dead.

“Every installation, every component (and) nearly every program will feel the brunt of these cuts. By 2019, we will reduce our end strength to unconscionable levels, likely losing ... another six (brigade combat teams), and potentially, a division headquarters, not to mention the very real impacts to associated enablers, contracts, facilities and civilian personnel.”

Army Secretary John McHugh, testifying for relief from the automatic funding cuts of sequestration before the House Committee on Appropriations in March 2015





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■ Transition and reintegration concerns for post-9/11 veterans vary significantly by cohort. Veterans and veterans with disabilities are distinct populations with differing needs and priorities. Military rank, seniority and gender also affect transition concerns.

■ Women veterans face a distinct set of challenges during and after military service. They are often more socially isolated, serve as primary caregivers in their families, are less likely to self-identify as veterans and participate in veteran programs, and sometimes have been subject to military sexual trauma.

■ Post-9/11 veterans, particularly the youngest among them, are generally unprepared for the transition from military to civilian life.

■ Family reintegration issues are among the most pressing concerns for post-9/11 veterans, yet are too often overlooked.

■ While coordinated and effective policies and programs are critical at the national level, the most urgent need for support services to assist the post-9/11 veteran population is at the local and

community-based level where veterans ultimately relocate.

As I work every day as an American Legion service officer to help veterans of all eras make life's various transitions, I salute all the men and women in uniform who have taken the oath to defend this nation. As we address the specific needs and concerns of the post-9/11 era, I am deeply aware that their war has been like none before it, and our support for today's newest veterans must reflect that.

Like their predecessors of earlier war eras, all have given some, and some have given all.

To all who have sworn to defend this nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and have borne true allegiance to that task, I thank you. You are all heroes. Nearly 3,000 American Legion service officers go to work every day and do everything in our power to ensure that our nation never forgets that. 🌿

Cajun Comeau is department service officer for The American Legion of North Carolina.



June 2015

450 advisers

President Obama authorizes the deployment of 450 U.S. military advisers to help Iraq defend itself against the Islamic State, drawing criticism from those who argue that such an intervention won't have a great effect on the terror group and its quest to overthrow the Islamic world.

"The reality today is that ISIL continues to gain territory in Iraq and Syria, while expanding its influence and presence across the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. There is no responsible ground force in either Iraq or Syria that is both willing and able to take territory away from ISIL and hold it, and none of our current training efforts of moderate Syrians, Sunni tribes or Iraqi Security Forces are as yet capable of producing such a ground force. It is unclear why the latest gradual escalation of effort, the deployment of a few hundred additional advisers to Anbar, will make the difference that our previous efforts failed to achieve."

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, opening a hearing July 7, 2015, about U.S. strategy to counter the Islamic State

July 4, 2015

Rocket shots at Israel

An ISIS-affiliated group uses Twitter to take credit for firing rockets into Israel from Egypt. ISIS threatens Hamas, accuses it of not being hard-line enough in its beliefs, and promises to take control of Gaza.



July 9, 2015

An army of fewer

The U.S. Army announces plans to reduce troop numbers by 40,000, to 450,000, and dismiss an additional 17,000 civilians by the end of 2018.

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Alvin M. Owsley, American Legion national commander, 1922

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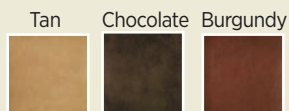
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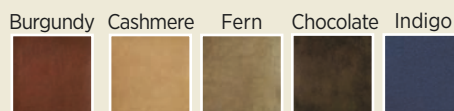
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Northrop Grumman photo

TECHNOLOGY

Airborne laser reborn

"Three years after the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) mothballed its Airborne Laser (ABL), MDA is planning to reboot the concept for a new era," BreakingDefense.com reports.

In its initial iteration, the ABL was a manned Boeing 747, with massive chemical tanks for generating laser power. "The new idea is a high-altitude, long-endurance drone armed with a more compact electrically powered laser," according to the website.

"The manned Airborne Laser maxed out at an altitude of about 40,000 feet, where clouds and turbulence made it harder to keep the beam on the target." The unmanned version of ABL will be able to reach far higher – and loiter far longer – than the original.

According to Vice Adm. James Syring, MDA director, "65,000 feet is where we think we need to be." At that altitude, the air is thinner – allowing the platform to fly in smoother atmosphere – and laser beams can reach farther.

"It is a very different approach than we did in the past of just leaping to something and investing everything we had," Syring said. He plans for a demonstrator missile-killing drone to be flying in 2021.



VERBATIM

Strong intent. Thankfully, low capability. But the concern is that they'll buy that capability.

John Rigg, section chief at the FBI's Cyber Division, confirming that the Islamic State has attempted, unsuccessfully, to hack the U.S. power grid. While they aren't yet using the most sophisticated tools, law-enforcement officials worry ISIS and its supporters will obtain malicious software to break into computers and disrupt the flow of power to U.S. homes and businesses.

Source: CNN

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The costs of Russia's war in Ukraine

The Atlantic Council, a nonpartisan research organization based in Washington, D.C., is keeping track of Russia's assault on Ukraine. Here's the analysis as of late 2015:

■ Russia has seized approximately 9 percent of Ukrainian territory.

■ The Russian-backed, Russian-fomented, Russian-funded and increasingly Russian-manned war against Ukraine has wounded 30,000 people and killed 6,200, including 298 aboard a civilian airliner shot down by Russian air-defense systems.

■ The war has displaced 1.38 million people.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, citing Russian news organizations, has reported that more than 2,000 Russian families have received compensation for relatives killed in Ukraine. Another 3,200 soldiers wounded in battle also received compensation, according to Russian federal budget documents cited by RFE/RL.

ACTIVE DUTY

Greater risks for women in combat

"Female soldiers suffered double the rate of injuries compared with male colleagues in Army combat training," *The Washington Times* reports, citing statistics obtained by the Center for Military Readiness (CMR).

CMR filed Freedom of Information Act requests with the Army, focusing on women in "combat job experiments" dating back to 2012. "Data showed that women in the occupational specialty of artillery surveyor/meteorological crewmember suffered more than double (113 percent) the injuries of men," according to the *Times*. "Women in basic combat, combat vehicle maintenance and engineers training produced the same lopsided injury ratio."

"The Department of Defense and Congress need to seriously consider the consequences of physical inequality between men and women," CMR president Elaine Donnelly told the *Times*. "Double risks of injury among women, combined with expected absences due to pregnancy and other gender-related issues, would be even more problematic in small combat units with four to 12 members, such as M1 tank crews, infantry rifle squads or cannon artillery gun crews."

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Ed Borucki of Southamptton, Mass., visits the shrine room at the USS Arizona Memorial in 2002. A former Navy yeoman, Legionnaire and Pearl Harbor survivor, Borucki attended commemoration events in Hawaii every year. He passed away Oct. 17 at 94.

U.S. Navy photos

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

America's 'day of infamy,' 74 years later

In 2014, about two dozen Pearl Harbor veterans attended the annual commemoration ceremony Dec. 7 in Hawaii, remembering America's "day of infamy." This year, even fewer are expected to make the journey, as surviving members of the greatest generation dwindle in number.

Virtually everyone on the islands during the Japanese sneak attack – from infants to the elderly – was a potential target, and like the rest of the world was deeply affected by the events that followed.

Not only is Dec. 7, 1941, etched in the mind of Bob Addobati, but so is Dec. 6. "There was a battle-of-the-bands contest in Chinatown that night," recalled Addobati, who was a 19-year-old signalman on USS *Solace*. "All the ships had different bands. I spoke to several sailors from USS *Arizona*'s band. Eight hours later, every sailor in that band was dead."

Founder of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association chapter in Sacramento, Calif., Addobati had a clear view of the devastating attack. "I was standing watch on the quarterdeck and saw the first wave of planes come in. The *Arizona* was next to us. I saw the explosion."

For the next two days, Addobati retrieved the dead and wounded from the water. "I think every battleship in the harbor took a torpedo," he said.



Proudly wearing an old Navy uniform, Edward Borucki was warmly greeted by then-American Legion National Commander Mike Helm following last year's Pearl Harbor ceremony.

A past district commander in the Department of Massachusetts, he recalled watching a film the night before the attack. "I saw 'Hold Back the Dawn,'" said Borucki, who was aboard USS

Helena during the attack. "How significant was that? I knew we were under attack when the general alarm sounded, telling us, 'Man your battle station. This is no drill.'"

Addobati, who later lost a leg when his ship was torpedoed at the Admiralty Islands, believed the warning signs of the attack were missed by those in charge.

"We broke codes and everything indicated something was up," he recalled. "At about 4 a.m. that morning, USS *Condor* made contact with a Japanese submarine and radioed ashore. They were radioed back that it was just a blackfish. They responded, 'If it's just a blackfish, it's got a propeller up its ass.'"

By 7:55 a.m., the attack on Pearl Harbor was underway. By day's end, 2,390 men, women and children had been killed. A sleeping giant was awakened, and the world was at war.

— John Raughter

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GALLERY

Two A-10 Warthogs, assigned to the 163rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, release flares after receiving fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker, 340th Expeditionary Aerial Refueling Squadron, over Southwest Asia on Oct. 13. Coalition forces fly daily missions in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the mission name for military intervention against the Islamic State. U.S. Air Force photo

WALK FOR VETERANS

The community has really embraced this. We saw legislative staff waving at us from their office windows. People stood outside the schools and waved to us. Plus, we had three TV stations and two newspapers reporting about it.

Jim LaCoursiere, past national vice commander, who helped organize an American Legion Walk for Veterans in Hartford, Conn., on Oct. 8

\$30,913 Donations raised for Operation Comfort Warriors at the Department of Indiana's 5K Walk/Run for Veterans on Oct. 11

3 Miles covered at the first Walk for Veterans in Manchester, N.H., on Sept. 12

45 Temperature on the morning of Oct. 3, when dozens of Legion Family members walked the grounds surrounding the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Mo.



Photo by Lucas Carter

Find out if an American Legion Walk for Veterans is scheduled for your area at www.legion.org/walkforveterans/events or by contacting your department headquarters.

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CAREERS

Modernize your résumé content



A great résumé starts with great content that clearly communicates your value in the workplace. Just as important, a modern résumé is readable by humans and technology alike since both are important considerations throughout your search.

If you're struggling to write

powerful and modern résumé content, follow these five guiding principles:

Start with the "wow." Begin your summary and experience sections with what makes you unique, memorable and qualified for the positions you are targeting. Highlight your achievements, responsibilities, technical skills and more that give you depth and help hiring managers remember you.

Write to your objective. The summary has replaced the objective on most résumés. However, your objective is still the guiding light. Always remember that your résumé is a marketing document written to showcase your skills, experiences and accomplishments as they relate to your career goals, while minimizing unrelated activities.

Tell your career story with power. Quantify your achievements whenever possible (\$4 million in savings, 42 percent gain); start sentences with strong verbs (designed, directed, trained); add context and specifics (where and how it happened). Most important, always write in the first person, dropping the "I" from the beginning of each sentence. When you do that, you own what's on the page.

Write tight, lean and clean. Long narrative paragraphs and lengthy lists of bulleted items are easy to skip over. To avoid that, tell your whole career story in half the words by editing ruthlessly and eliminating information that doesn't matter. Don't include words that mean nothing (a, an, the) and do use common abbreviations that your target audience will recognize.

Integrate critical keywords. Keywords are the foundation for all résumé-scanning technology and must be a core component of your résumé. Research keywords for the positions you're targeting and include them throughout your résumé – if they are skills and qualifications you have.

Write using these guidelines, and you'll succeed in crafting a modern résumé that gets you noticed and hired.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions" and "Expert Résumés for Career Changers."



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Soldiers of the United States, the people of the British Isles welcome you on your way to take your stand beside the armies of many Nations now fighting in the Old World the great battle for human freedom.

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George R. I.

April 1918.

CENTENNIAL

Post 138, Ronan, Mont.

Ronan Post 138, chartered in 2002, is actually the successor of Ronan's first Legion post, Mount Harding Post 124, chartered in 1926. With no permanent home, the former has no place to keep artifacts from the latter – but they haven't left Ronan.

In addition to the original 1926 charter and pictures of the World War I veterans who founded Mount Harding, Post 138 placed on its Centennial Celebration page a photo of an April 1918 letter from King George V of England, sent from Windsor Castle and addressed to "Soldiers of the United States." Staff at the local Garden of the Rockies Museum, which focuses on preservation of local buildings and historical items, discovered the letter in a box of similarly dated photos.

Who brought the letter back from Europe, and how it ended up at the museum, is unknown.

Share your post's legacy

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

www.legion.org/centennial

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— Janet F.

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MEMBERSHIP

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Col. Bill Barber Post 838, Irvine, Calif. Chartered Oct. 12 (15 members)

Bataan Post 600, San Francisco Chartered Oct. 12 (15 members)

Okeechobee Correctional Institution Post 408, Okeechobee, Fla. Chartered Oct. 12 (15 members)

Post 401, Allendale, Mich. Chartered Oct. 12 (16 members)

Post 272, Hope Valley, R.I. Chartered Sept. 15 (15 members)

Post 214, Taylors, S.C. Chartered Aug. 11 (38 members)

CNM Community College Post 505, Albuquerque, N.M. Chartered July 29 (15 members)

Silver Owls Post 2016, Colorado Springs, Colo. Chartered July 29 (15 members)

Lee F. Pickett Post 298, Spencer, Wis. Chartered July 9 (16 members)

EDUCATION

Legion selects Samsung Scholars

The American Legion has selected 10 winners of the 2015 Samsung American Legion Scholarship. Each will receive \$20,000 for undergraduate studies.

The recipients are Kaden Shawn McArthur, Wellsville, Utah; Michael McFarland, Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.; Isaac Logeman, St. Cloud, Minn.; Grant L. Moles, Cook, Neb.; Calvin Isch, Bluffton, Ind.; Katherine Mossburg, Bridgeport, W.Va.; Curtis Colby Leonard, Surfside Beach, S.C.; Nicholas Van Slooten, Bentonville, Ark.; Devon Kurtz, Westfield, Mass.; and Meghan Slattery, Bayport, N.Y.

An additional 88 finalists will be awarded \$852 each.

 www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung



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National Commander Dale Barnett opens the National Executive Committee's Fall Meetings in Indianapolis on Oct. 14. Photo by Clay Lomneth

Commander on membership: 'You want to be on a winning team'

The National Executive Committee's Fall Meetings focused on three areas: membership, VA accountability, and National Commander Dale Barnett's Walk for Veterans events.

WALK FOR VETERANS Barnett is challenging all departments to conduct Walk for Veterans events to raise awareness about veterans and the Legion's importance in local communities. By mid-October, walks had been conducted in New Hampshire, Missouri, Connecticut and Indiana. "What a great opportunity for us to share our message to our communities on what we do in The American Legion," Barnett said. "I hope we can do awareness walks in as many places as we can, and it doesn't have to be with me."

VA ACCOUNTABILITY Barnett announced his plans to attend a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing Oct. 21 regarding a VA inspector general report on the relocation of VA staff, due to not fulfilling their job requirements, to other VA positions with higher pay. He encouraged Legionnaires to join him in making the Legion's voice heard. "It's a system worth saving, but it's not a system worth protecting senior executive officers who take advantage of the situation," Barnett said.

MEMBERSHIP Just six departments reported being ahead of where they were in membership in 2014. "That's not the direction we need to go," Barnett said. "I know it's difficult. But I know that you want to be on a winning team, and we've got to turn membership around," especially with a \$5 dues increase starting in 2016. "I need your help."

LEGION BASEBALL COMMITTEE The NEC addressed growth in one of the Legion's most popular youth programs, approving the creation of the American Legion Baseball Committee. Previously led by a subcommittee, ALB's profile has risen sharply since Shelby, N.C., became the home of the American Legion World Series in 2011, with the tournament experiencing 36 percent growth in attendance and more people watching it than ever, thanks to expanded coverage on ESPN networks. A key figure in these successes is Larry Price of South Dakota, who recently retired after nearly two decades as chairman of the American Legion Baseball Subcommittee. "I am very proud of what we have accomplished over the past 19 years and what we will continue to do here," Price said during the Fall Meetings, where he was honored with a plaque and engraved bat.

Key resolutions of the 2015 Fall Meetings

AMERICANISM

- 1 Creation of American Legion Baseball Committee
- 20 Encourage local, state and federal legislation to honor the anniversary of "In God We Trust" motto
- 21 Rename "Veterans in the Classroom" initiative "Veterans in Community Schools"
- 22 The American Legion 21st Century Policy on Education

FINANCE

- 2 Creation of American Legion College Alumni Association
- 4 Sponsor National Speech & Debate Association
- 6 Include National Guard and reserve members in Spirit of Service Awards

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

- 8 Assign American Legion Riders Advisory Committee to Internal Affairs Commission
- 10 Assign 100th Anniversary Observance Committee to Internal Affairs Commission
- 11 Commend and promote Las Vegas Veterans Memorial project
- 12 Support construction of National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial
- 13 Support construction of a national World War I memorial at Pershing Park in Washington, D.C.
- 15 Issue temporary charter to Post TH01 in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

- 16 Support veteran caretaker stipend
- 17 Expand benefits to Medal of Honor recipients
- 18 Better VA care for women veterans

VETERANS EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

- 7 Support the Coalition for Veteran Owned Business
- 9 Assign TBI/PTSD Committee to Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

The full text of all 26 resolutions is available in the Legion's Digital Archive online.

 archive.legion.org, click on Resolutions

Granddaughter, I Love You to the Moon

Musical Glitter Globe



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of "Always in
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dangling heart

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CITIZENSHIP

'I AM AN AMERICAN'

When Randolph Kelly emigrated with his family from Belize to the United States in 1968, he felt an immediate attachment to the United States – so much that he decided to enlist in the Army four years later.

His 30-year military career spanned three war eras and ended with his retirement at the rank of sergeant major in 2002. Yet he wasn't a true U.S. citizen.

Kelly, now 62 and living in Mission, Texas, is one of an estimated 640,000 foreign-born veterans who used their lawful permanent resident status to enlist but remain unnaturalized even after decades of service.

Many mistakenly believe that their service confers U.S. citizenship, says Elizabeth Ricci, an immigration law attorney out of Tallahassee, Fla., who represents veterans like Kelly pro bono in their quests to become Americans.

"The oath of allegiance for naturalization and the oath of enlistment have similar wording," she says. "A lot of people get confused by that."

In September, Ricci joined Kelly at his naturalization ceremony at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in Harlingen, Texas. A second-generation American herself, she works with the American Legion Department of Florida to alert foreign-born veterans of the cost-free, fast-track naturalization option available to them if they served during a period of hostility.

"Even if you don't have a green card, if you've served during any of the hostility periods you can jump straight to citizenship," Ricci says. However, it's crucial that foreign-born veterans not assume citizenship unless they have documentation proving it – specifically, a passport or naturalization certificate.

"If they don't have either of those things, and if they didn't take a (naturalization) oath before either a judge or an immigration officer, chances are they are not a citizen and just mistakenly believe they are," she adds.

Normally, permanent immigrants must reside lawfully in the United States for at least five years to receive citizenship. But U.S. law provides expedited naturalization for those who



Army veteran Randolph Kelly, 64, takes the oath of allegiance at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services field office in Harlingen, Texas. Photo by Delcia Lopez

served honorably in the U.S. military during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or any other period of hostility declared by a president. In July 2002, President George W. Bush signed an executive order declaring a period of hostility that began Sept. 11, 2001, and is still open today.

In addition, the law waives the \$680 naturalization fee for foreign-born veterans and servicemembers, and grants U.S. citizenship in eight to 10 months.

Greece-born Vietnam War veteran Michael Michelis says he was assured of U.S. citizenship when he signed the dotted line on his military contract. Michelis, like Kelly, was naturalized this year with Ricci's help. "I was told if I signed up and got an honorable discharge, I'd be a citizen," he says.

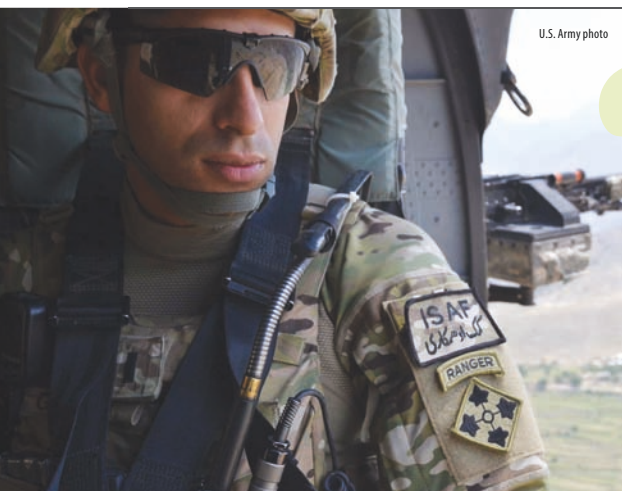
Ricci says it's important for all foreign-born veterans to have proper documentation on hand, because it's a felony to make misrepresentations about citizenship.

American Legion service officers can help by encouraging foreign-born veterans to check if they have naturalization certificates or proof of citizenship, she adds.

– Andy Romey

Download the Legion's Citizenship Outreach Guide:

 www.legion.org/publications



U.S. Army photo

VERBATIM

It felt like a blow torch was burning through my leg. Aug. 8, 2012, was not a bad day; it was the worst day of my life.

Retired Army Capt. Florent Groberg, who received the Medal of Honor on Nov. 12 for his actions in Kunar province, Afghanistan. While providing a security detail for senior U.S. military leaders, he and his fellow soldiers were ambushed by two suicide bombers. Groberg rushed the first and was seriously injured when the bomb detonated. "My fibia was sticking out of my left leg, my skin was melting and there was blood everywhere," he recalls. Born in France, Groberg became a U.S. citizen in 2001. He is the 10th living recipient of the Medal of Honor for actions in Afghanistan. Source: Army News Service

How a Chicago Doctor Shook Up the Hearing Aid Industry with his Newest Invention

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

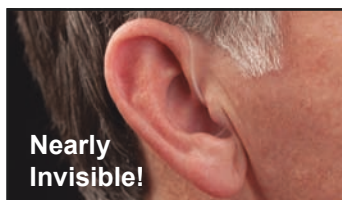
Chicago: Board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, ALL-DIGITAL, affordable hearing aid.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,500 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind—without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a digital medical-grade hearing aid remains out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense for these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance plans.



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- ✓ Mini Behind-the-Ear hearing aid with thin tubing for a nearly invisible profile
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- ✓ Telecoil setting for use with compatible phones, and looped environments like churches
- ✓ 3 Programs and Volume Dial accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

The doctor evaluated the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version — called the MDHearingAid *AIR* for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

Affordable Digital Technology

Using advanced digital technology, the MDHearingAid *AIR* automatically adjusts to your listening environment — prioritizing speech and de-emphasizing background noise. Experience all of the sounds you've been missing at a price you can afford. This doctor designed and approved hearing aid comes with a full year's supply of long-life batteries. It delivers crisp, clear sound all day long and the soft flexible ear domes are so comfortable you won't realize you're wearing them.

Try it Yourself at Home 45-Day Risk-Free Trial

Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-Day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

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A study by Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

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“Almost work too well. I am a teacher and hearing much better now” —Lillian B., California

“I have used many expensive hearing aids, some over \$5,000. The AIRs have greatly improved my enjoyment of life” —Som Y., Michigan

“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss” —Amy S., Audiologist, Indiana



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PERSONAL FINANCE



Give the gift of higher education with a 529 plan

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

Education may not be on your mind entering the holiday season, but with the cost of a bachelor's degree from a public university nearing six figures, maybe it should be.

If you're looking for a gift with staying power, consider one to help your child or grandchild offset those skyrocketing costs.

Specifically, I'm talking about 529 college savings plans. These tax-advantaged plans offer a unique way to save for college. They've been around for more than 10 years, and while most are sponsored by individual states, you can use accumulated money at a college anywhere in the country.

Whether you're considering setting up a 529 account for your child or contributing to one for your grandchild, here are seven things to understand:

■ **Big tax benefits.** The account is tax-deferred, and you won't end up paying federal income tax on withdrawals – on neither what you contributed nor the earnings – assuming the money is used for qualified higher-education expenses.

■ **Low entry and high contribution limits.** Typically, you can set up an account with as little as several hundred dollars and add as little as \$25 on any occasion. On the other hand, most plans let you accumulate up to several hundred thousand dollars for the beneficiary.

■ **Flexibility.** You can change the beneficiary to another eligible family member, and if the money goes unused, it reverts to the account owner. Note, however, that earnings on "non-qualified" withdrawals would be subject to income taxes and a 10 percent penalty.

■ **Turnkey investment options.** With premixed static portfolios and age-based portfolios that become more conservative as the beneficiary nears college age, most plans offer investment possibilities that won't eat up a lot of time.

■ **Favorable financial aid treatment.** Plans owned by the student or parent receive favorable treatment as parental assets in calculations for federal financial aid. This means that using a 529 plan is unlikely to limit the student's access to needs-based grants, scholarships or loans. One caution: withdrawals from accounts owned by grandparents or other third parties are considered untaxed income to the student and can negatively affect eligibility for financial aid, so you may want to steer clear of that approach.

■ **State income tax savings.** Some states offer state income tax deductions for 529 contributions.

■ **They aren't for everyone.** If you're looking to save for expenses outside what the IRS considers "qualified," these plans may not be for you. Generally, qualified higher-education expenses in this context include tuition, fees, books and supplies, and room and board (with limitations). Unlike some other saving options, 529 plans are limited to higher education, so expenses for elementary or secondary school, or even transportation, are not considered qualified.

Learn more about the advantages and limitations of 529 plans by checking out IRS Publication 970. This year, as you're preparing for the holidays, consider a gift that will help your family avoid the student-loan crisis.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

EDUCATION

The Top-Up program and tuition assistance

MY GI BILL

VETERANS & EDUCATION
BY VALERIE HEFFNER

Q: *I am currently in the Army. However, after reviewing the cost of the classes I want to enroll in and tuition assistance, I do not have enough money to pay for the courses. How does Top-Up work, and am I eligible to receive this benefit?*

A: Top-Up benefits may be an option if you plan to use tuition assistance to complete a degree program while on

active duty, and don't plan to continue your education after service. Top-Up can also help when taking just a few courses with tuition assistance while on active duty, allowing you to save GI Bill benefits to complete your education after service.

Top-Up is only available to recipients of the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty or Post-9/11 GI Bill programs. The amount of this benefit can be equal to the difference between the total cost of a college course and the amount of tuition assistance paid by the military for the course. To be eligible for the Top-Up program, you must be approved for federal tuition assistance by a military department. You also must be eligible for Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty or Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits.

Carefully consider your situation, and check with your education officer or counselor before applying.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. askvalerie@legion.org

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Long Distance Calls	No add'l charge	No add'l charge
Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
Friendly Return Policy ¹	30 days	30 days

More minute plans available. Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

1st Trans Bn (FAMF), Corpus Christi, TX, 5/15-17, Bruce Binns, (269) 345-6279, ccbaypip@gmail.com; **117th AHC 8th Trans Light Helo (Vietnam, 1961-1972)**, Herndon, FL, 6/14-18, Allen Bennett, (850) 834-3376, namvet42@hotmail.com; **664th AC&W**, Bellefontaine, OH, 6/24-26, Billy Stafford, (937) 592-2306, wildbill@columbus.rr.com; **C-123s in SEA**, Fort Walton Beach, FL, 4/4-8, Sue Rice, (417) 872-9750, ricepad13@gmail.com; **OCS Class 1956B 60-Year Reunion**, Branson, MO, 6/13-18, Glynn McCoy, (918) 872-9350, glynn.mccoy@cox.net; **Pennsylvania Air Nat'l Guard 111th Bomb Wing - 65th Anniv (Fairchild AFB, WA, Apr 1951-Dec 1952)**, Media, PA, 4/1, Jack Peters, (610) 459-1867

ARMY

3rd Armd Div (Spearhead), Washington, 7/13-16, Gale Messier, (803) 393-2001, president@3ad.org; **15th Med Bn 1st Air Cav Div**, Olympia, WA, 4/11-18, Larry Hatch, (360) 491-6486, campingout@comcast.net; **24th Inf Div (Desert Storm)**, Fort Stewart, GA, 2/24-28, www.desertstorm24id.com; **Paratroopers**, Hilton Head Island, SC, 2/25-28, Bill Eberle, (843) 682-4171, airborneben@hargray.com

JOINT

Inchon LPH/MCS 12 (Shipmates & Marines), Warwick, RI, 5/15-19, David Fix, (717) 203-4152, ussinchon@gmail.com

MARINES

A Btry 1st Bn 11th Mar, Herndon, VA, 4/15-19, Peter Van Ryzin, (540) 347-3267, vanryzin1@hughes.net; **Plt 271 (Parris Island, SC, Mar-May 1966)**, Beaufort, SC, 3/22-24, Jack McCormack, (631) 331-5008, oakcrest@optonline.net; **VMA(AW) 242 (Vietnam Era)**, Gettysburg, PA, 5/1-4, Bill Mellors, 242reunion@gmail.com

NAVY

Albemarle AV 5, Corpus Christi Bay, TX, 5/15-17, Bruce Binns, (269) 345-6279, ccbaypip@gmail.com; **Belle Grove LSD 2**, Lafayette, LA, 7/10-16, Forrest Peltier, (337) 519-9468, forest@ptwinc.net; **Grand Canyon AD/AR 28**, Charleston, SC, 9/12-15, Tom Chamberlin, (843) 504-8771, wthamberlin@aol.com; **Harlan R. Dickson DD 708**, 10/31-11/4, North Myrtle Beach, SC, Jim Jones Jr., (540) 292-8268, pjonesjr42@gmail.com; **Litchfield County LST 901**, San Diego, 3/3-7, Don Lerche, (309) 928-3395, donlerche@yahoo.com; **NMCB 40**, Davenport, IA, 4/14-17, Bruce Cheek, (563) 349-4129, seabee40@ctsteldridge.com; **Park County LST 1077**, San Diego, 3/3-7, Mike Kempf, (317) 490-4229, m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net; **Rich DD/DDE 820**, Nashville, TN, 4/25-29, Gary Wilson, (615) 371-0130, reunion2016@ussrich.org; **Robert E. Peary FF 1073**, St. Louis, 6/16-18, Don Winfield, (520) 271-8684, tucsonviruslayer@gmail.com; **Shannon DM 25**, Norfolk, VA, 5/23-25, Rodney Tourville, (931) 434-1689, rodney.w.tourville@gmail.com; **Sutter County LST 1150**, San Diego, 3/3-7, Guy Simmons, (978) 476-3895, guyjimmmons@aol.com; **Swordfish SSN 579**, Charleston, SC, 5/6-9, Jerry Koebel, (853) 991-0773, jakoebel@aol.com; **Thomas E. Fraser DM 24**, Norfolk, VA, 5/23-25, Rodney Tourville, (931) 434-1689, rodney.w.tourville@gmail.com; **Truckee AO 147**, Nashville, TN, 9/14-18, Mike Landers, (770) 926-6965, mlanders52@yahoo.com

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Post 164, MI: Ervin E. Weber

COMRADES IN DISTRESS

USAF F-4 Aircraft, Ubon, Thailand (Sept 1970-Sept 1971), Thomas M. Jenkins seeks witnesses to verify his exposure to radiation, asbestos and Agent Orange. CID 1510

IN SEARCH OF

5th Eng Bn 921st Eng Grp WAC Det (Fort Leonard Wood, MO, 1961-1963), Janice Cowher Russo, (724) 516-4375, jmr_mba@yahoo.com
80th Trans Depot (Okinawa, 1951-1952), Boyd Beatty, (765) 748-5835
134th AHC Co 1st Plt "Deadly Demons" Crew Chiefs, Gunners & Pilots (Phu Hiep, Vietnam, 1969-1970), Bill Murphy, (601) 569-1089, wcm549@outlook.com
348th Trans Co (MTP) (Opn Desert Shield/Desert Storm), Joe Coumes, (909) 815-1320, coumes@earthlink.net
420th FA Grp HQ Btry 531 & 532nd FA Bns (Okinawa, 1945), David Hirsch, (310) 475-9159, boffin0356@gmail.com
557th Ord Co (DS) (Aschaffenburg, Germany, 1952-1955), Kermit Shaneyfelt, (816) 942-9579, kwshaney@gmail.com
801st Mtn Bn 101st Abn Div A Co (Camp Eagle, Hue-Phu Bai, Vietnam, Mar 1969-Feb 1970), Robert "Moon" Mullins, (304) 732-7172
6314th APRON Air Police (Osan AB, Korea, 1961-1962), Archie Moore, (205) 515-4291, bkatmoore@bellsouth.net
A Co 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Plts 37th Armd Inf Bn Div Arty 3rd Armd Div (Fort Knox, KY, Feb-May 1953), Robert Baker, (610) 827-1293, calgarygolden@yahoo.com
D Co 1/11 ACR Fulda (1980-1982), Mark "Ragoo" Regatuso, (585) 658-2119
Fort Lee, VA, Baseball Team (1962-1963), Chuck Roys, (413) 548-9090, sdroys@gmail.com
G Co MPRTC Basic Training (Fort Gordon, GA, Nov 1952-Apr 1953), Larry Howard, (602) 809-2333, lavi813@aol.com
HQ 70th FA Bn Radar Sqd (SS Kaserne, Nurnberg, Germany, 1952), Al Richert, (516) 681-0376, richertbuf@gmail.com
HQ Btry 420th FA Grp (Okinawa, 1945), Dave Hirsch, (310) 920-7422, boffin0356@gmail.com
NAVCOMSTAPHIL (San Miguel, Philippines, Jan 1966-July 1968), Frederick Smith, rs.js.ss@verizon.net
Navy Ceremonial Guard & President's Yacht (1959-1963), Pat Manley, (314) 993-9694
NTC Bainbridge, MD, Radioman "A" School (July 1965-Jan 1966), Frederick Smith, rs.js.ss@verizon.net
VA-212 Line Crew Ship 207 (NAS Moffett Field, CA, 1957-1958), Joe Lee, (678) 458-0463
VF-111 (Kitty Hawk & NAS Miramar, 1962-1965), Richard Caria, (570) 489-0771, rcaria520@comcast.net



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TAPS

Delfo Barabani, Dept. of Massachusetts. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1953-1954, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1956-1958, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1982-1992 and 1997-2015, and Nat'l Historian 1992-1993.

Barry C. Cicero, Dept. of Illinois. Nat'l Media & Comm. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2015.

Charles E. Forsythe, Dept. of West Virginia. Dept. Cmdr. 1972-1973, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb.

1973-1975, Nat'l American Legion Magazine Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1973-1975 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1976-1979.

Austin Z. Hanner, Dept. of Arkansas. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1998-2008 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2008-2011.

Richard M. Motsinger, Dept. of Indiana. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2006-2008, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2008-2013 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2015.

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b. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Paid/Requested outside-county subscriptions stated on Form 3541	2,071,487	2,052,226
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3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	4,287	4,345
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1. Outside-county as stated on Form 3541	2,942	2,926
2. In-county as stated on Form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
e. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
f. Total Free distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e)	2,942	2,926
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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.
Jeffrey Stoffer, Publisher

There's nothing like the Christmas season to put a little bounce in your checks.

SOME PARENTS have taken to buying their children batteries for Christmas – with a sign saying “Toys not included.”

THIS EXPANDED Christmas shopping season is a win for kids. They can sit on Santa's lap and testify about how good they've been, then go home and act wild for a few weeks.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: “Survey Finds Many Employees Lacking in Basic Skills.”

ONE PATIENT in a doctor's waiting room said, “The doctor says I can't play tennis.”

Another patient replied, with a sigh, “She beat you too, huh?”

A YOUNG WOMAN who looked sore and tired got on a crowded bus with a pair of ice skates slung over her shoulder. As the bus pulled away from the curb, a man offered her his seat.

“No, thank you,” she replied. “I've been sitting most of the morning.”

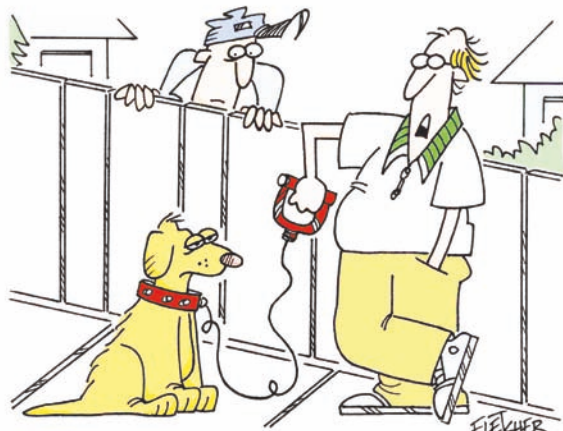
A JUDGE asked a defendant, “Why did you throw the pot of geraniums at the plaintiff?”

“The newspaper told me to do it, your honor,” the defendant replied.

“Are you serious?” the judge exclaimed.

“Yes. The ad said, ‘Say it with flowers.’ So I did.”

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS is dotted with many tempting parking places.



“We don't like to use the ‘Speak’ command. He tends to be verbose.”



“My smartphone communicates with my smartwatch and smart TV. I think they're all calling me stupid behind my back.”



Generation gap

A BOY excitedly told his parents, “I'm in the church's Christmas play!”

“Which part did you get?” his mother asked.

“I'm a wise guy!”

WHAT SONG do you sing at a snowman's birthday party? “Freeze a Jolly Good Fellow.”

A WAITER saw a diner wave and walked over to his table. “How did you find your steak, sir?”

“Well,” the man replied, “it was simple. I just lifted up a Brussels sprout, and there it was!”

JACK AND JILL went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. Jack fell down and broke his crown, and sued the farmer and Jill, too.

“A NEW SURVEY found 95 percent more people plan to cancel their cable service in 2016 than in 2011. Incidentally, 2011 to 2016 is the same window that the cable guy gave you for when he was stopping by.” – Seth Meyers

ATTENTION:

MEN USING PRESCRIBED TESTOSTERONE THERAPY

Testosterone products, which are prescribed to treat low testosterone ("Low T") in men, have become popular among young men seeking physical enhancement and older men who want to counter signs of aging. But there is growing concern that these products have serious side effects and long-term risks, particularly related to the heart.

Recent peer-reviewed articles published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, as well as an analysis by

epidemiologist, William Finkle, and researchers at UCLA, have studied the rate of heart attacks in 55,000 men who began Testosterone Therapy within 90 days. In men 65 and older, the risk more than doubled. In men younger than 65, with a history of heart disease, the risk almost tripled.

Dr. Steve Nissen, a cardiologist with the Cleveland Clinic, states "What's going on is a giant experiment with American men's health at stake." A lot of Testosterone

Therapy is off label usage according to Dr. Nissen. A review of medical records revealed that Testosterone might be causing problems by increasing clotting within arteries supplying the heart.

On March 3, 2015, the FDA required a labeling change for all prescription testosterone products to reflect the possible increased risk of heart attacks and strokes associated with testosterone use.

Act now, if you were prescribed a Low T therapy — for any reason — you should talk to your doctor about the recent research findings and to assess any risks to your health.

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